20.   (Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the local gate program sends the statement to remove the first call request from the local temporary file to a second temporary file, and the local server program pulls the statement from the second temporary file and executes the statement against the local temporary file.

It is respectfully submitted that support may be found in the originally filed specification, including the drawings, for each of the amendments in the replacement claims.

REMARKS

I.   Status of the Application.

Following the above-amendments, claims 1-30 are pending in the application. In the October 30, 2002 Office Action, the examiner:

A.   Rejected claims 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention;

B.   Rejected claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to make or use the invention;

C.   Rejected claims 1, 5-9, 11, and 14-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,009,149 to Langsenkamp (hereinafter "Langsenkamp");

D.   Rejected claims 19, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,002,748 to Leichner (hereinafter, "Leichner").

E.   Rejected claims 2-4 and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Langsenkamp in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,445,784 to Uppaluru et al (hereinafter,

"Uppaluru");

F.   Rejected claims 10 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Langsenkamp in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,978,460 to Butts et al (hereinafter, "Butts");

G.   Rejected claims 20, 23 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Leichner in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,546,455 to Joyce et al (hereinafter, "Joyce"); and

H.   Rejected claims 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leichner

in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,067,457 to Erickson et al (hereinafter, "Erickson").

In this response, applicant has (i) amended claims 8 and 20 to overcome the examiner's rejection

under 35 U.S.C. § 112, (ii) traversed the examiner's rejection of claims 5, 6, 7, 14, 15 and 16 under 35

U.S.C. § 112, and (iii) traversed the examiner's rejection of claims 1-30 under 35 U.S.C.§ 102(e) and

§103. Accordingly, claims 1-30 are pending in the present application. Applicant respectfully requests

reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

**II.   The Examiner's Rejection of Claims 5, 6, 7, 14, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 Should be
Withdrawn.**

In the October 30, 2002, office action, the examiner rejected claims 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, and 16 under

35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for allegedly failing to clearly define the terms

"emergency area" and/or "the path of a weather event."

As set forth in MPEP § 2173.05(a), "[t]he meaning of every term used in a claim should be

apparent from the prior art or from the *specification and drawings*" (emphasis added). Applicant

respectfully submits that the term "emergency area" is clearly apparent from the specification and drawings. In particular, p.8, line 17-19 of the specification states, "the city must first determine the *emergency area* needing to be warned of the emergency. Once this area is determined, the mapping device is used to define an *emergency area* where warning calls will be placed using the automated phone calling system" (emphasis added). Furthermore, with reference to Fig. 4, page 24, line 26 of the specification states, "this first trapezoidal area 91 is then defined as the *first emergency area*" (emphasis added).

Applicant also respectfully submits that the term "the path of a weather event" is also clearly apparent from the specification and drawings. In particular, p. 24, lines 21-23 of the specification states, "the mapping device 59 is capable of continuous upgrades to the emergency area ... such continuous upgrades may be useful when tracking *the path of a weather event*" (emphasis added).

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the meaning of the terms "emergency area" and "the path of a weather event" are apparent from the specification and drawings of the application, and the examiner's rejection of claims 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, should be withdrawn.

III.   The Examiner's Rejection of Claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 Should be Withdrawn.

In the October 30, 2002, office action, the examiner rejected claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for allegedly failing to provide sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation "new call request". Applicant respectfully points out that the phrase "... wherein new call requests ..." in claim 8 provides sufficient antecedent basis for the term "... each of the new call requests ...". Furthermore, Applicant has amended claim 8 to remove the word "with" and add a comma.

Applicant believes that this amendment will make it more clear that proper antecedent basis exists for the limitation "new call request". Accordingly, the examiner's objection to claim 8 should be withdrawn.

IV.   The Examiner's Rejection of Claim 20 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112 Should be Withdrawn.

In the October 30, 2002, office action, the examiner rejected claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such as way as to enable one of skilled in the art to make and/or use the invention. In particular, the examiner alleges that the claim language "local gate program sends the statement to remove the first request from the local temporary file to a second temporary file" is not disclosed in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to make and/or use the invention. Furthermore, the examiner alleges that the claim language "the local server program removes the statement from the second temporary file and executes the statement against the local temporary file" is not disclosed in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to make and/or use the invention.

Applicant respectfully submits that each of the above claim limitations are disclosed and adequately described in the specification at page 14, lines 1-7. The second temporary file is the Qserv database 76, shown in Fig. 3. The local gate program is the Qserv program 70, also shown in Fig. 3 along with the local temporary file, queue 58. Furthermore, applicant has amended claim 8 to use the term "pulls" instead of "remove" consistent with the specification. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the above claim limitations are clearly described in the specification, including Fig. 3, in such a way to allow one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the invention, and the examiner's rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 should be withdrawn.

V.   **The Examiner's Rejection of Claims 1, 5-9, 11 and 14-17 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) Should**

be Withdrawn.

In the October 30, 2002 Office Action, the examiner rejected claims 1, 5-9 11 and 14-17 as being

anticipated by Langsenkamp under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). As set forth below, applicant traverses the

examiner's rejection of claims 1, 5-9 11 and 14-17 as being anticipated by Langsenkamp under 35 U.S.C.

§ 102(e). Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests the examiner to withdraw the rejections.

A.   **Independent Claim 1**

MPEP § 2131 provides, "a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the

claim is found, either expressly or inherently described in a single prior art reference." *Verdegall Bros. v.*

Union Oil Co. of California, 814 F.2d 628 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as

complete detail as contained in the ... claim." Applicant's independent claim 1 includes the limitation of

"a network interface connected to a network, the network interface operable to send call requests stored in

the temporary file to a remote node, the remote node operable to initiate phone calls to the callees using

the call requests." This limitation is not disclosed in Langsenkamp.

The examiner argues that the "telecommunications interface 53-56" of Langsenkamp is

equivalent to the "network interface" of claim 1. However, there is no disclosure that the

"telecommunications interface" of Langsenkamp is "operable to send call requests stored in the temporary

file to a remote node", as required by claim 1. In addition, Langsenkamp does not disclose a remote node

that is "operable to initiate phone calls to callees using the call requests received from the first node".

Therefore, contrary to the examiner's position that all elements of claim 1 are disclosed in Langsenkamp,

at least element (f) of "a network interface ... operable to send call requests stored in the temporary file to

a remote node, the remote node operable to initiate phone calls to the callees using the call requests" is

not disclosed in Langsenkamp, so the rejection is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

B.   Independent Claim 11

MPEP § 2131 provides, "a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described in a single prior art reference." *Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as contained in the ... claim." Applicant's independent claim 11 includes the step of "sending a second group of the generated call requests to a remote node, the remote node operable to initiate phone calls to callees based on the second group of call requests." This limitation is not disclosed in Langsenkamp. In fact the examiner's October 30, 2002 office action did not set forth any allegedly equivalent disclosure in Langsenkamp. Therefore, contrary to the examiner's position that all elements of claim 11 are disclosed in Langsenkamp, at least element (f) of "sending a second group of the generated call requests to a remote node, the remote node operable to initiate phone calls to callees based on the second group of call requests" is not disclosed, so the rejection is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

C.   Dependent Claims 5-9 and 14-17

As set forth above, Langsenkamp does not disclose all elements of applicant's invention as claimed in independent claims 1 and 11, and the rejection of independent claims 1 and 11 should be withdrawn. In addition, because claims 5-9 and 14-17 depend from and incorporate all the limitations of either independent claim 1 or 11, the examiner's rejection of claims 5-9 and 14-17 should also be withdrawn.

VI.   The Examiner's Rejection of Claims 19, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29 and 30 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Should be Withdrawn

In the October 30, 2002 Office Action, the examiner rejected claims 19, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29 and 30 as being anticipated by Langsenkamp under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). As set forth below, applicant traverses the examiner's rejection of claims 19, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29 and 30 as being anticipated by Langsenkamp under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests the examiner to withdraw the rejections.

A.   Independent Claim 19

MPEP § 2131 provides, "a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described in a single prior art reference." *Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as contained in the ... claim." Applicant's independent claim 19 includes the limitation of "sending a first call request of the plurality of call requests to a local serving program for determining whether to process the first call request from the local node or the remote node." This limitation (d) is not disclosed in Leichner.

The examiner argues with regard to section (d) of claim 19, that the disclosure in Leichner of "look up local exchange(s) at the location of the threat" reads on the claimed step of "determining whether to process the first call request from the local node or the remote node." The examiner asserts that the local node is "the local exchange that covers the geographical location where the central computer resides," and the remote node is "any other local exchange that does not cover the geographical location where the central computer resides."

It is respectfully submitted that the examiner's position is incorrect for at least two reasons. First, the examiner's construction of the word "node" is incorrect. In particular, page 6, lines 7-8 of the

specification states that the term "node" refers to "one of the plurality of automated calling systems connected by a network." A local exchange is not an automated calling system, and thus any disclosure of local and remote exchanges in Leichner does not read upon section (d) of claim 19. Second, even if a node is construed to include local and remote exchanges, there is no disclosure in Leichner of "sending a first call request to the plurality of call requests to a local serving program for determining whether to process the first call request from the local node or the remote node." Specifically, Leichner makes no disclosure of a local serving program operable to determine where a first call request of a plurality of call requests should be processed. Therefore, contrary to the examiner's position that all elements of claim 1 are disclosed in Leichner, at least element (d) of "sending a first call request to the plurality of call requests to a local serving program for determining whether to process the first call request from the local node or the remote node " is not disclosed in Leichner, so the rejection is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

B. Independent Claims 27 and 29

MPEP § 2131 provides, "a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described in a single prior art reference." *Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as contained in the ... claim." Applicant's independent claims 27 and 29 both include the limitation of "sending the call request to a second of the plurality of remote nodes if the call response has not been received from the first of the plurality of remote nodes following a predetermined period of time after sending the call request." This limitation is not disclosed in Leichner. In fact the examiner's October 30, 2002 office action did not set forth any allegedly equivalent disclosure in Leichner. Therefore, contrary to the examiner's position that all limitations of claims 27 and 29 are disclosed in Leichner, the limitation of "sending the call request to a second of the plurality of remote nodes if the call

response has not been received from the first of the plurality of remote nodes following a predetermined

period of time after sending the call request" is not disclosed, so the rejection is unsupported by the art

and should be withdrawn.

C.   Dependent Claims 21, 22, 28 and 30

As set forth above, Leichner does not disclose all elements of applicant's invention as claimed in

independent claims 19, 27 and 29, and the rejection of independent claims 19, 27 and 29 should be

withdrawn. In addition, because claims 21, 22, 28 and 30 depend from and incorporate all the limitations

of either independent claim 19, 27 or 29, the examiner's rejection of claims 21, 22, 28 and 30 should also

be withdrawn.

VII.   The Examiner's Rejection of Claims 2-4, 10, 12-13, 18, 20 and 23-26 Under 35 U.S.C. §

103(a) Should be Withdrawn.

In the October 30, 2002 Office Action, the examiner rejected claims 2-4, 10, 12-13, 18, 20 and

23-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over (i) Langsenkamp in view of Uppaluru or Butts

or (ii) Leichner in view of Joyce or Erickson. As set forth below, applicant traverses the examiner's

rejection of claims 2-4, 10, 12-13, 18, 20 and 23-26 as being unpatentable over under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests the examiner to withdraw the rejections.

A.   The Examiner Has Failed to Make a *Prima Facie* Case of Obviousness.

First, the rejection of claims 2-4, 10, 12-13, 18, 20 and 23-26 as being unpatentable over under 35

U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn because the examiner has failed to make a *prima facie* case of

obviousness. In particular, in order for the examiner to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, there

must be some suggestion or motivation to modify the references or combine the reference teachings.

MPEP § 2143. In order to "prevent the use of hindsight based on the invention," the examiner must show

a motivation to combine the references that creates the case for obviousness. *In re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350

(Fed. Cir 1998). The mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant

combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination. *In re Mills*,

916 F.2d 680 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Furthermore, identification in the prior art of each individual part claimed

is insufficient to defeat patentability of the whole claimed invention. See *In re Kotzab*, 217 F3d 1365

(Fed. Cir. 2000). Rather, to establish obviousness based on a combination of the elements disclosed in

the prior art, there must be some motivation, suggestion or teaching of the desirability of making the

specific combination that was made by the applicant. *Id.* at 1369.

In the October 20, 2002 office action, the examiner failed to provide evidence of any motivation,

suggestion or teaching in the prior art to combine the references and arrive at the rejection of claims 2-4,

10, 12-13, 18, 20 and 23-26. For example, the only explanation provided by the examiner for combining

Langsenkamp and Uppaluru with respect to claims 2 and 12 is found on page 10, lines 5-11, where the

examiner states, "[i]t would have been obvious to one skilled at the time the invention was made to

modify Langsenkamp to have the network interface further provides [sic] the ability to receive additional

call requests from the remote node ...". The examiner does not reference anything in the prior art to

suggest the desirability of such a combination, as required by MPEP § 2143. Accordingly, the examiner

has failed to make a *prima facie* case of obviousness, and the rejection of claims 2 and 12 under 35 U.S.C.

§ 103(a) should be withdrawn. Similarly, the examiner's rejection of claims 3-4, 10, 13, 18, 20 and 23-26

as being unpatentable over under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should also be withdrawn.

B.   Claims 2-4, 10, 12-13, 18, 20 and 23-26 Depend From Allowable Base Claims

Second, the examiner's rejection of claims 2-4, 10, 12-13, 18, 20 and 23-26 should be withdrawn

because each of these claims depends from an allowable base claim. In particular, as set forth above, the

examiner's rejections of independent claims 1, 11, 19, 27 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) should be

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withdrawn. Accordingly, because claims 2-4, 10, 12-13, 18, 20 and 23-26 depend from and incorporate

all the limitations of either independent claim 1, 11, 19, 27 or 29, the examiner's rejection of claims 2-4,

10, 12-13, 18, 20 and 23-26 should also be withdrawn.

VIII. Conclusion.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that applicant has made a patentable

contribution to the art which clearly distinguishes over and is patentable over the cited art. Favorable

reconsideration and allowance of this application is therefore respectfully requested.

In the event applicant has inadvertently overlooked the need for an extension or payment of an

additional fee, applicant conditionally petitions therefore, and authorizes any deficiency to be charged to

deposit account number 09-0007.

Sincerely,

ICE MILLER

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REF/pgf
Enclosures: Exhibit A
cc: Al Langsenkamp

EXHIBIT A

MARKED UP VERSION OF CLAIMS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Deleted claims language is shown below in bold and strike-through. Added claim language is shown below in bold and underline.

1. A nodal calling system used to place phone calls to callees, the nodal calling system comprising:

   a. a database comprising a plurality of phone numbers and at least one data field associated with each of the plurality of phone numbers, the at least one data field containing information representing a geographic location;

   b. a memory for storing a message to be transmitted over at least one phone line; *to receive the stored message*

   c. a mapping device for defining a calling area, the calling area used to select a subset of phone numbers from the database, each of the subset of phone numbers having information representing a geographic location within the calling area in the at least one data field associated with the phone number;

   d. a temporary file for storing call requests, each of the call requests containing one of the phone numbers from the subset of phone numbers selected from the database;

   e. at least one telecommunications interface connected to the at least one phone line, the telecommunications interface providing the ability to initiate phone calls to the callees using the call requests stored in the temporary file; and *a first group of*

f.   a network interface connected to a network, the network interface operable to send call requests *from the 1st group call request* stored in the temporary file to a remote node, the remote node operable to initiate phone *to a second group of the* calls to the callees using the call requests.

2.   The nodal calling system of claim 1 wherein the network interface further provides the ability to receive additional call requests from the remote node, the remote node containing a second database comprising a plurality of phone numbers and each additional call request received from the remote node containing a phone number selected from the second database.

3.   The nodal calling system of claim 2 wherein the temporary file is further operable to store the additional call requests from the remote node, and the at least one telecommunications interface is further operable to initiate phone calls to callees using the additional call requests from the remote node.

4.   The nodal calling system of claim 1 wherein the temporary file is a queue.

5.   The nodal calling system of claim 1 wherein the calling area is an emergency area and the mapping device is operable to automatically update the emergency area to a new emergency area.

6.   The nodal calling system of claim 5 wherein the mapping device is operable to automatically update the emergency area based upon the path of a weather event.

7.   The nodal calling system of claim 5 wherein, the new emergency area is used to select a new subset of phone numbers from the database, each of the new subset of phone numbers having information representing a geographic location within the new emergency area in the at least one data field associated with the phone number.

8.   (Amended) The nodal calling system of claim 7 wherein new call requests are stored in the temporary file, ~~with~~ each of the new call requests containing one of the phone numbers from the new subset of phone numbers selected from the database.

9.   The nodal calling system of claim 1 wherein the message to be transmitted over the at least one phone line is an audio message.

10.   The nodal calling system of claim 1 wherein the message to be transmitted over the at least one phone line is a fax message.

11.   A method of automatically placing phone calls to callees in a calling area, the method comprising the steps of:

   a.   providing a database comprising a plurality of phone numbers and at least one data field associated with each of the plurality of phone numbers, the at least one data field containing information representing a geographic location;

   b.   recording a message to be transmitted to the callees;

   c.   defining a calling area to receive the recorded message, the calling area used to select a subset of phone numbers from the database, each of the subset of phone numbers having information representing a geographic location within the calling area in the at least one data field associated with the phone number;

   d.   generating call requests and storing the call requests in a queue, each of the call requests containing one of the phone numbers from the subset of phone numbers selected from the database;

   e.   initiating calls to callees based on a first group of the generated call requests; and

f. sending a second group of the generated call requests to a remote node, the remote node operable to initiate phone calls to callees based on the second group of call requests.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of receiving call requests from the remote node and each call request received from the remote node containing a phone number not contained in the database.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of storing the call requests from the remote node in the queue and initiating phone calls to callees using the call requests from the remote node.

14. The method of claim 11 the calling area is an emergency area, and the emergency area is automatically updated periodically to a new emergency area.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the emergency area is automatically updated based upon the path of a weather event.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein, the new emergency area is used to select a new subset of phone numbers from the database, each of the new subset of phone numbers having information representing a geographic location within the new emergency area in the at least one data field associated with the phone number.

17. The method of claim 11 wherein the message to be transmitted to the callees is an audio message.

18. The method of claim 11 wherein the message to be transmitted to the callees is a fax message.

19. A method of using a local node and a remote node to place telephone calls to a group of callees, the method comprising:

a. defining a calling area;

b. selecting a plurality of phone numbers from a database based on the calling area;

c. storing a plurality of call requests in a local temporary file, each call request containing one of the plurality of phone numbers and at least one data field containing information about processing the call to be made to the one of the plurality of phone numbers;

d. sending a first call request of the plurality of call requests to a local serving program for determining whether to process the first call request from the local node or the remote node;

e. sending the first call request to a local template program for processing the first call request if the local serving program determines to process the first call request from the local node, the local template program operable to

   (i) place a call to the telephone number contained in the first call request and generate a first call response, and

   (ii) send the first call response to a local gate program which generates a statement to update the first call request in the local temporary file or remove the first call request from the local temporary file;

f. sending the first call request to a remote gate program for entering the call request in a remote temporary file if the local serving program determines to process the first call request from the remote node.

20. (Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the local gate program sends the statement to remove the first call request from the local temporary file to a second temporary file,

and the local server program ~~removes~~**pulls** the statement from the second temporary file and executes the statement against the local temporary file.

21. The method of claim 19 wherein the local gate program executes the statement to update the first call request against the local temporary file.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein the first call request sent to the remote gate program is received at the remote node and entered into a remote temporary file.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the first call request entered into the remote temporary file is sent to a remote serving program which delivers the first call request to a remote template program which places a call to the telephone number contained in the first call request and generates a first call response, and sends the first call response to a remote gate program which generates a statement to remove the first call response from the remote temporary file.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein the remote gate program also generates a statement for delivery to the local node to update the first call request in the first temporary file or remove the first call request in the first temporary file.

25. The method of claim 19 wherein the at least one datafield includes a priority datafield containing information about the order in which the first call request should be processed in relation to a plurality of other call requests.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the information in the priority datafield for the first call request is changed after it is sent to the remote node to reflect the priority of the first call request in the remote node.

27. A method of operating an automated nodal calling system comprising the steps of:

a. providing a local node comprising a database having a plurality of phone numbers;

b. generating a call request at the local node, the call request including one of the plurality of phone numbers from the database;

c. providing a plurality of remote nodes operable to process the call request and generate a call response for the call request, the call response indicating the result of the call request;

d. providing a network connecting the local node to each of the plurality of remote nodes, the network allowing the local node to send data to each of the plurality of remote nodes and receive data from each of the plurality of remote nodes;

e. sending the call request to a first of the plurality of remote nodes for processing the call request; and

f. sending the call request to a second of the plurality of remote nodes if the call response has not been received from the first of the plurality of remote nodes following a predetermined period of time after sending the call request.

28. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of preventing the first of the plurality of remote nodes from processing the call request if the call request has not been processed following the pre-determined period of time.

29. An automated nodal calling system comprising:

a. a local node comprising a database having a plurality of phone numbers, the local node operable to generate a call request, the call request including one of the plurality of phone numbers from the database;

b.   a plurality of remote nodes, each of the remote nodes operable to process the call request from the local node and generate a call response for the call request, the call response indicating the result of the call request;

c.   a network connecting the local node to each of the plurality of remote nodes, the network allowing the local node to send data to each of the plurality of remote nodes and receive data from each of the plurality of remote nodes;

wherein the local node is further operable to send the call request to a first of the plurality of remote nodes for processing the call request and send the call request to a second of the plurality of remote nodes if the call response has not been received from the first of the plurality of remote nodes following a predetermined period after sending the call request.

30.   The automated nodal calling system of claim 29 wherein the first of the plurality of remote nodes is prevented from processing the call request if the call request has not been processed following the predetermined period of time.